DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 135 881 UD 016 690

TITLE	Handbook for Teachers of Vietnamese Students.
INSTITUTION	Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, Tex.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jun 76
CONTRACT	300-75-0324
NOTE	47p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Differences; *Cultural Environment; *Cultural Traits; Educational Background; Educational History; *Immigrants; *Indochinese
IDENTIFIERS	*Vietnam

ABSTRACT

This handbook was prepared to acquaint American teachers with Vietnamese students' background and way of life. It describes the history, culture, language, and educational system of these students and addresses the following areas: cultural differences, curriculum, classroom schedules, and family mores. The booklet is freely adapted from "Background Notes: South Vietnam" published by the U.S. Department of State, from "A Handbook for Teachers of Vietnamese Students: Hints for Dealing with Cultural Differences in Schools" by the Center for Applied Linguistics, and from "Common Vocabulary Words and Phrases". Also included is information extracted from IDRA Seminary Digest, "Programmatic Recommendations and Considerations in Assisting School Districts to Serve Vietnamese Children". A short bibliography is included. (Author/AM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED135881

HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Intercultural Development
Research Association

June, 1976

UD016690

This handbook was produced pursuant to a Contract #300-75-0324 (6-18-75) from the U. S. Office of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Office of Education and no official endorsement by the U. S. Office of Education should be inferred.

Board of Directors

Chairman of the Board
Mr. Terrence Dean
Managing Editor
The Laredo Times
P.O. Box 791
Laredo, Texas 78041

Past Chairman
Mrs. Ann Fairchild
President, Galveston League of
Women Voters
10 Pirates Drive
Galveston, Texas 77554

Secretary
Mrs. L. Dianne Haley
179 Westridge
Trenton, Texas 75490

Mr. Dennis Bixler
Chairman, Texas Advisory Committee
to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
301 Third Street
Texarkana, Texas 75501

Mr. Lionel J. Castillo
Counselor
City of Houston
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77001

Dr. James A. Fuerste
Director of Community
& Student Affairs
University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas 78285

Mr. Carlos Cuevas
Deputy Superintendent
for Central Instructional Services
Houston ISD
3830 Richmond
Houston, Texas 77027

Mr. Willis Hernandez, Jr.
Attorney
Suite 2 Del Mundo
San Antonio, Texas 78209

Mr. Manuel Machado
Attorney
El Centro College
301 North
Dallas, Texas 75202

Mr. Henry Flores
Associate Commissioner
Education for Employment
Texas Ed.
1200 E. Anderson
Austin, Texas 78752

Mr. Larry Smith
Executive Director
San Antonio City Union
311 E. Craig
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Mr. William G. Baker
Chairman
Texas Boys Choir
P.O. Box 1625
San Antonio, Texas 78296

Mr. Jesse Trevino
President, Board of Directors
MALDEF
1115 Broadway
San Diego, Texas 78384

Mr. Arturo Vela
Executive Committee
Texas Ed.
San Antonio
El Paso, Texas 79901

Dr. Antonia Cortese
Executive Director

MALDEF is a non-profit organization, with a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to provide information to the general public concerning matters of educational opportunity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i
INTRODUCTION 1
GEOGRAPHY 4
HISTORY 5
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES 7
SHYNESS AND MODESTY 9
THE VIETNAMESE SMILE 11
WRITING 12
THE CONCEPT OF TIME 13
SOUNDS 14
FORMS OF ADDRESS 15
COURTESY 17
EDUCATION 18
CURRICULUM 20
CLASSROOM SCHEDULES 21
INSTRUCTION 23
ASSIGNMENTS 26
GRADING SYSTEM 27
ARITHMETIC AND NUMERIC SIGNS AND SYMBOLS 29
PHYSICAL EDUCATION 30
FAMILY MORES 31
PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS 33
BIBLIOGRAPHY 38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook has been prepared as one approach in an effort to develop school district capability to respond to the needs of children of limited English-speaking ability. It was compiled by Dr. Kathryn Jagoda Caragonne, Component Manager, edited by Stephen W. Maldonado, Education Specialist and assembled with the assistance of Josefina Franco, Education Specialist, with the Center for the Management of Innovation in Multicultural Education.

The information presented in this booklet is freely adapted from "Background Notes: South Vietnam" published by the U. S. Department of State, and A Handbook for Teachers of Vietnamese Students: Hints for Dealing with Cultural Differences in Schools by Duong Thanh Binh, published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, and "Common Vocabulary Words and Phrases" from Ted Griffin, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana. Also included is information extracted from IDRA Seminar Digest: "Programmatic Recommendations and Considerations in Assisting School Districts to Serve Vietnamese Children" (June 28, 1976).

Special acknowledgement is extended to Tang Thi Thanh Van, a consultant with the National Resource Center at the University of Southern Louisiana in Lafayette; Dr. Do Ba Khe, Institute of Cultural Pluralism, San Diego State University; Le Ba

Kong, publisher and Reverend Dominic Nguyen Thanh Binh, director of the Vietnamese American Cultural Center in San Antonio.

Our appreciation is also extended to the five assistant teachers from the Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas who reviewed the manuscript: Quy Tran, Huong Pham, Hang Tran, Toan Le, Lan Tran, and also to Mary Turk, coordinator.

DR. JOSE A. CARDENAS,
Director
Intercultural Development
Research Association

INTRODUCTION

Since 1954, South and North Vietnam have been engaged in Civil War. Armistice was declared in 1973. Children who you will be teaching have grown up under wartime conditions and many of them may bring with them memories of bombings, guerrilla attacks, loss of family and loved ones. They have been violently uprooted from their home, their way of life, and are forced to cope with a new language and culture in a foreign land. For the most part, you will find them resilient and adaptable children. As a teacher of Vietnamese students you have the special charge of providing a receptive, understanding environment. You have a great deal to contribute to their becoming fulfilled and active participants in the life of their new country.

The following few pages contain information on the history, culture, language and educational system of Vietnam. By learning about your new students' background, their way of life and expectations, it is hoped that you can help them adjust and deal with the differences they might encounter in the United States.

VIETNAM
and neighboring countries
SCALE OF MILES
C H I N A
GULF OF TONKIN
HAINAN
L A O S
THAILAND
(S I A M)
SOUTH CHINA SEA
CAMBODIA
GULF OF SIAM
BANGKOK
PHNOM PENH
N
W
E
S

GEOGRAPHY

Vietnam is a narrow strip of land comprised of high hills, swamps, and rice land curving along the South China Sea. Cambodia and Laos lie to the west.

Topographically, South Vietnam is divided into four main regions. The lower third of the country is dominated by the estuary of the Mekong River system which gives the country a low, flat, and frequently marshy appearance. The soil in the Mekong Delta area is very rich making this region the most productive agricultural area in the country, particularly in the production of rice. To the north and east of Saigon are the eastern provinces of southern Vietnam. Topographically much more varied than the Mekong Delta area, they include considerable areas of low-lying tropical rain forest, upland forest, and the rugged terrain of the southern end of the Annamite Mountain chain.

Central Vietnam is divided into a narrow coastal strip where intensive rice farming is practiced, and a broad plateau area separated by the Annamite chain.

While Saigon and the Mekong Delta to the south experience a year-round tropical climate, the central lowlands and mountainous regions are cool from about October to March, the temperature sometimes dropping to 50-55^{o} F. Rainfall is heavy in the Delta and highlands in the summer, and in the central lowlands in the winter.

HISTORY

Historical tradition states that the Vietnamese people originated in the valley of the Yellow River in North China and that they were slowly driven southwards by pressure from the Han Chinese. Historical records first identify the Vietnamese as a tribal people inhabiting the Red River Delta in North Vietnam. Today, they occupy the entire eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese peninsula from the border of China in the north to the Gulf of Thailand in the south, an area somewhat larger than New Mexico.

After gaining effective independence from China in the 16th century, the Vietnamese maintained their freedom until the mid-19th century when the French established effective control over all of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia which they administered as Indo-China. In 1940, Japanese troops moved into northern Vietnam as their first step in the conquest of Southeast Asia; in 1941 they moved into southern Vietnam and remained there until their surrender to the Allied Powers in 1945.

An uprising broke out in August 1945 and the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" was proclaimed with Ho Chi Minh as its leader. A prolonged three-way struggle ensued among the Vietnamese Communists led by Ho Chi Minh, the French and the Vietnamese nationalists nominally led by Emperor Bao Dai. The Communists saw their struggle as a national uprising while the

French attempted to reestablish their control. Bao Dai's nationalists chose to fight militarily with the French against the Communists. Ho's Viet Minh forces fought a highly successful guerrilla campaign and eventually controlled almost all of rural Vietnam. The French military disaster at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, and the conference at Geneva where France signed an armistice in July 1954, marked the end of the 8-year war and French colonial rule in Indo-China.

The ensuing hostilities which involved America ended in 1975.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Vietnamese culture is influenced by both classical Chinese and Indian civilization with important European elements introduced as a result of nearly 100 years of French rule. The first and probably still the most pervasive influence is Chinese. In 111 B.C., Vietnam was incorporated as the southernmost province of the Chinese empire, and the Vietnamese remained under Chinese rule for more than a millennium. Even after Vietnam regained its independence in 939 A.D., the Chinese influence persisted. Many Chinese elements are revealed today in culture, art forms and in the Vietnamese language. The great importance of the family and the profound respect which the Vietnamese accord learning and age stem from the Confucian ethic. Nearly all rural people and many urban Vietnamese continue to observe the traditional rites honoring their ancestors. Many Vietnamese fathers, for example, strongly state that they are fathers to their sons and not "buddies." Vietnamese parents and their children show love through respect and through respect they uphold the traditional credo of ancestral worship.

The religion of most Vietnamese is a mixture of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism, both from China, plus animistic practices such as reverence for village guardian spirits. Some elements of

influence from these far eastern religions, including Confucianism, are harmoniously reflected in traditional practices of the approximately 1.5 million Vietnamese who are Roman Catholic.

SHYNESS AND MODESTY

What a Westerner would interpret as shyness in a Vietnamese might more accurately be termed as a reserved attitude toward strangers or toward a person one does not know well. It is also a polite attitude used by Vietnamese to show respect for their elders or superiors.

The Vietnamese people have been brought up to respect and accept the opinions of their elders, or at least not to disagree openly. In a social situation, it is very important to maintain harmony between speakers to "save face" of someone whose opinion might turn out to be wrong.

They have been brought up to accept orders or direction from elders or superiors, rather than take an initiative. It is therefore not surprising that people from different cultural backgrounds have often thought that the Vietnamese are passive. According to Vietnamese custom, one should remain modest and humble, showing the extent of one's knowledge or skills only when asked. In Vietnam one is expected to say less than what one actually knows. Modesty and humility for Vietnamese are important social graces, deeply ingrained into their identity.

Vietnamese have been taught to refuse praise by saying that they did not deserve it. For example, in a situation where a Vietnamese lady is being praised for her beauty, instead of

accepting the compliment from her friend gracefully and naturally--as would be common in the United States--she would probably say something to the effect that she was not pretty, but that her friend might have gotten the impression from her clothes. This behavior stems from the fact that they have been taught not to be demonstrative in public, especially not to express personal emotions which might be considered immodest or boastful.

Vietnamese students are not actually shy in class, but they do not want to call attention to themselves. They are afraid, of course, to "lose face" if they make mistakes, and they do not want to appear as "showoffs" when they know the answer. They seldom volunteer to answer questions, and they are reluctant to ask questions of the teacher even when they do not understand. They will ask their classmates instead.

Teachers should understand that questions such as "Do you understand?", "Do you know what I mean?", will almost surely elicit a positive response even when the students have not understood at all. To avoid frustration, teachers should ask very specific questions allowing students no possibility for what might appear to be evasive answers.

THE VIETNAMESE SMILE

Almost any non-Oriental who has visited Vietnam or come in contact with the Vietnamese has noticed a rather puzzling habit--a perpetual and enigmatic smile in all circumstances, unhappy as well as happy.

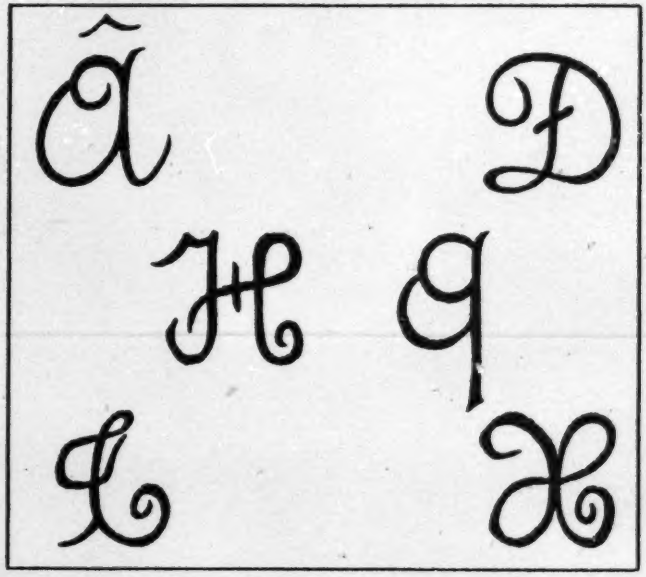
Vietnamese will smile when foreigners cannot pronounce their names properly; they will smile to show their interest in what a speaker is telling them; they will smile to help their friend forget a mistake the latter makes. We perceive the Vietnamese smile as a polite screen to hide confusion, ignorance, fear, contrition, shyness, bitterness, disappointment, or anger.

Many foreign teachers in Vietnam have been irritated and frustrated when Vietnamese students seem to smile in what appears to be the wrong time and place. They cannot understand how the students can smile when reprimanded, when not understanding the lessons being explained, and especially when they should have given an answer to the question instead of sitting still and smiling quietly.

Perhaps in time the American instructor, with caring empathy, can effectively deal with this form of non-verbal communication.

WRITING

The present writing system of Vietnamese is a modified Roman alphabet system devised by the European missionaries in collaboration with the Vietnamese more than two centuries ago. Its spelling system is closely related to the spoken form of Vietnamese. Due to close geographical proximity and cultural influences, the Vietnamese language contains a high percentage of vocabulary items borrowed from Chinese, just as English has borrowed extensively from Latin and French.



THE CONCEPT OF TIME

Exactitude in the matter of time is not considered as important in rural Vietnam as it is in the industrialized, urbanized United States. To express the notion of past versus present, or plural versus singular, the Vietnamese does not use inflectional suffixes such as play in contrast to played. Rather, as a reflection of its culture, the Vietnamese language has a set of particles which are used to express time relationships, i.e., they mention two or more events which occur at the same time rather than an expression of definite time. This does not mean that the Vietnamese language is not capable of expressing definite time, but it does mean that this concept of time and the way of expressing it will influence the way the Vietnamese uses English when his knowledge of the latter language is still imperfect.

SOUNDS

The pronunciation of sounds in the final position of a word such as s (in consonant clusters), and final es, t, d, and b are unfamiliar to the Vietnamese tongue and ear, and as such they are often ignored by the Vietnamese. In speaking English, e.g., you might hear a Vietnamese say something like: "I work har on my tes las nigh" - I worked hard on my test last night.

Yes-No and Tag Questions: Whether students agree or disagree with the speaker, responses always start with the English word yes, a translation of the polite form da used in Vietnamese. So, in listening to the response of a Vietnamese, it is best to ignore the initial "Yes," and concentrate on the statement that follows the form yes in order to interpret the answer. The initial "yes" merely means that the student is listening--paying attention to the speaker--but this "yes" does not refer to the student's agreement or disagreement with the question asked.

FORMS OF ADDRESS

A typical Vietnamese name has from 2 to 4 words. For example:

1	2	3
Nguyen	Van	Kien
(family)	(middle)	(given)

Van, the middle name, comes second and Kien, the given name, comes last. Due to respect for the person addressed and for his ancestors, the family name (1) is not used. The name commonly used is the given name (3) -- Kien in the above example--which is equivalent to "Mr. Smith" when one addresses Mr. Frank Smith in the United States. A Vietnamese would be addressed as Mr. Kien. In other words, the use of a family name in the U.S. is equivalent to the use of a given name in Vietnam. However, in a conversation, a Vietnamese rarely uses names to address a person, since this is considered impolite in Vietnam. Use of actual names is permissible only if he is on intimate terms with the speaker.

The usual form of address in Vietnamese is the use of an appropriate personal pronoun preceded by the polite form thua, with no mention of family or given names. There is no similar device in English, unless perhaps English-speakers wish to say something like "honored sister" or "my distinguished teacher."

The Vietnamese do not use family or given names in their

daily lives but use a polite term plus a personal pronoun. The forms of address used in Vietnam are in terms of relationship, rank, and age among the members of a family. Vietnamese students consider teachers to be spiritual parents (both morally and academically) who guide them to the right path in life. The terms thay (father) and co (aunt, mother), which are used by the Vietnamese students at all levels to address their teachers, have been in use in Vietnam for many centuries.

The common form of address would be:

THUA THAY or THUA CO

Thua is a polite form used before a personal pronoun when addressing or talking to someone superior to oneself in family/social rank. Notice that no family or given names are used.

COURTESY

Students in elementary and secondary schools in Vietnam are taught to stand up when the teacher enters the class and to sit down when the teacher gives permission (orally or by a wave of hand). This courtesy is also observed when a guest visits the class. At the university, however, this practice is not generally carried out.

Greetings between Vietnamese are usually a handshake between two males, or a joining of the person's own hands and a slight inclination of the head between two men, two women, or a man and a woman. For the young Vietnamese, a smile and a slight inclination of the head is enough.

The student never uses the teacher's name in Vietnam. There are no equivalent polite formulas for "Good morning," "Good afternoon," or "Good-bye" in Vietnamese, but the above formula is comparable to the American forms of greeting. Inside a Vietnamese classroom, it is courteous to observe silence to allow the teacher to speak without interruption and classmates to study without interference. Polite forms such as "thank you," "sorry," "excuse me," "I beg your pardon," are also used, but with great care, for to the Vietnamese the user might be regarded as insincere if he used them in profusion.

EDUCATION

Since the time Vietnam became independent at the end of World War II, its educational system has undergone tremendous changes. From being restricted to the education of a few (less than 1% of the population), it later involved almost the total population. Expansion of school facilities and teacher training centers, development of programs of studies to fit the needs of the country, translation of French and English textbooks into Vietnamese, replacement of French by Vietnamese as the language of instruction in classes at all levels, and development of adult literacy programs took place. Despite all the difficulties caused by the long years of war, accomplishments in the field of education were impressive.

Vietnamese, as the Chinese, have always reserved an honored place in society for educated or "learned" people. Education proved to be a great social levelling force in Vietnam for many centuries. There never was a landed or hereditary aristocracy in Vietnam, but there has always been an aristocracy of learning where the poorest boy from the most humble family in a village could become a high official in the Imperial Court. Vietnamese parents have been known to spare no sacrifices to give their children an education.

There is no compulsory education in Vietnam but because of

the status of education, there is a low illiteracy rate. Public schools at the primary level were open to every child of school age. Pre-school and kindergarten were given a low priority because of the financial burden of war. Therefore, early childhood programs were virtually unknown with the exception of those private schools that initiated programs along the Montessori and other models. At the secondary school level, however, an entrance examination limited the number of students accepted. Hence, there were numerous private schools to accommodate students who were not eligible for public high school. In the last few years, the same thing happened at the university level and many private universities had been established.

Despite great achievements, the education system in Vietnam had some weaknesses. Some of them were its heavily academically-oriented program, its inflexible nature, and its narrowness in terms of programs which do not take those individuals into account who do not fit into the existing educational molds.

CURRICULUM

With the exception of the university, which was academically autonomous, primary and secondary education in Vietnam was directly under the control of the Ministry of Education. The curricula of grade schools and high schools, the subjects taught, their contents, the required units for each subject, the textbooks used, and teaching strategies were all planned by the Ministry. This same system exists in France.

The program of studies was uniform throughout the country up to the fourth year of high school except for the choice of learning English or French as the first foreign language. At the senior high school level, majors in the following three fields were offered: Humanities; Mathematics; and Science. The technical high schools had a program of vocational training which was slightly different from the above academic programs.

CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

The teacher usually stood or sat at an elevated desk at the front of the classroom. Occasionally, the teacher would take a stroll to check on the students who sat in the back of the room. Desks and benches for two to five students were put in straight and permanently fixed rows along the length of the room facing the teacher's desk.

Each student had a specific seat which was marked on a seating map. His or her seat could be changed only by request or by the decision of the teacher. Usually, the front rows were occupied by short-sighted students, by girls in a mixed class, or by students who were relatively studious and less noisy than those in the back rows.

Students had to remain quiet in their seats during class and could only leave their seats by raising their right hand or by order of the teacher. There was a 5-minute break between the first and second and between the third and fourth class periods to allow a change of teachers, and a longer 20-minute break after the second class period. During this time, the students were allowed to go to the school yard. The number of students in a classroom varied from 40 to 65 in the public schools, and from 60 to 100 in the private schools. As there were shortages of school facilities, students were usually divided into two shifts--a morning shift from

7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. for those in senior high school, and an afternoon shift from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for those in junior high school. Evening classes were also held in most of the school buildings in the cities from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. for adult students or any student who could not attend day school. Classes were divided at the primary school level into three shifts: 7:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Between class periods when there were changes of subjects, the teachers moved from one classroom to another but the students remained in their own classroom for the entire day and, in fact, for the entire school year.

INSTRUCTION

Rote learning was the method used by the majority of Vietnamese students. This method, though not necessarily bad, may discourage students from seeking information through extensive reading of books and magazines.

Oral exercises were initiated by the teacher who started the questioning by calling on various students to give answers or by allowing volunteers to do so. It should also be noted that all class activities were initiated by the teacher. The usual procedure was to give the same assignment to the whole class to avoid complaints. After the lesson was explained, the students were allowed to ask questions concerning anything they had not understood. Rarely, however, did the Vietnamese students do so. Competition was very keen among individuals. The teacher was always the final authority in any discussion held in class. The Vietnamese student, in other words, will expect to have an authoritarian teacher, and may initially be puzzled by one who is not.

The teacher of Vietnamese children can capitalize on that system by using it as a bridge to the current eclectic approach found in American classrooms. Insistence upon immediate conversion to a pedagogical methodology unfamiliar to Vietnamese children only creates frustrations and humiliation. The shift should be a gradual one using the rote system as a means of "climatizing"

students to a new experience in learning.

The students, furthermore, will not be accustomed to using library facilities or to doing in-depth research. They will be more accustomed to short, limited reading materials rather than long and extensive ones. It is therefore advisable for teachers to introduce the Vietnamese students gradually to the practice of extensive reading, to searching for information related to the lesson concerned, and to being responsible for their own studies. At least during the first few weeks of schooling, the children will respond better to more limited and structured class activities with a gradual relaxation of control when they have become accustomed to the new school procedures.

A great deal of encouragement and guidance in assisting them to develop oral communication skills inside and outside of the classroom will also be necessary in order to help them succeed in their studies. Teachers should deliberately plan activities which require verbal interchange with individual students or perhaps small groups before Vietnamese students are asked to speak to large groups or to the whole class. Such a careful pacing of the Vietnamese students' verbal involvement--moving from individual, to small group, to larger groups--will establish a period of linguistic and interpersonal confidence. Asking a Vietnamese student to speak too soon to an entire group may inhibit his or her oral development and embarrass the student.

Recommendations: (1) Gradual introduction of individual responsibility for instruction; (2) restricted activities for the first few weeks of school and (3) oral communication skills (initial limitation of the number of individuals the student must communicate with at one time).

ASSIGNMENTS

The Vietnamese Ministry of Education required the schools to give each student at least one grade score for every school subject during every month of the academic year. This grade could be acquired either from a written assignment done in class or at home, or from an oral quiz given in class. Indeed, oral quizzing was a fairly common practice in school. Students were expected to know their lessons well, but each time only a small percentage of the class was tested.

It was common, at the end of each lesson, to inform the students when a quiz on that lesson would be given and what the form of that quiz would be--written or oral. Home assignments were given with clear instructions about their length and form and the due date. Some teachers would relent if there were protests from the students about having too many assignments to do, and the time for completing the assignment might be lengthened or the form might be changed from written to oral.

In Vietnam, textbooks were fairly expensive and school library facilities were virtually nonexistent. The teacher often dictated the lesson to his students who copied the lessons in their notebooks. When the teacher gave an oral quiz, he would check the students' copybooks to see whether they were kept clean, complete, in order, and whether the lessons were copied accurately.

GRADING SYSTEM

The academic year--two semesters--started in the middle of September and ended toward the last of May. Students were expected to take examinations at the end of each semester for all the subjects they had during the school year. Their moving up to the next class or staying at the same level the following year depended very much on the grades they received in these two end-of-semester examinations. Additional examinations were provided for those students who passed all subjects except one or two.

Grading by letters A, B, C, D was used only in some private schools like those run by the Vietnamese-American Association, the London School, or the International School in Vietnam. In other words, letter grading is not generally familiar to Vietnamese students and should be explained in comparison to the 20-point system, approximately as follows:

0-10	Elementary grades
0-20	High school and college
A+ range	17-20
A range	14-16
B range	11-13
C range	7-10
D range	4-6
F range	0-3

F- range Sub-zero

Because of these striking differences, school counselors and teachers should take special care in explaining items such as the credit system and course requirements to both the pupil and to the parents.

ARITHMETIC AND NUMERIC SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Vietnam adopted the French system of writing mathematical signs and symbols. The following are samples of the differences between the Vietnamese and the American practices:

	Vietnamese	American
One	1	1
Seven	7	7
Two thousand	2.000	2,000
Fifty cents	0,50	0.50

Division is not the same in the two countries. For example, 278 divided by 42:

	Vietnamese	American
278	42	6.61
260	6,61	42 / 278.00
080		252
38		260
		252
		080
		42
		38

Vietnamese also use the decimal and metric system in the measure of length, volume and weight. Centigrade rather than Fahrenheit is used to measure temperature. The classroom teacher may wish to use the metric skills of the Vietnamese students in helping their other classmates.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A few sports are offered, but only at boys schools: soccer, basketball, table tennis, etc. Facilities reserved for sports did not exist in Vietnam. Locker room practices familiar to Americans will be unknown to Vietnamese; dressing and undressing in front of others and group showering were not done, and therefore must be handled with consideration for the Vietnamese students' basic modesty.

FAMILY MORES

Sex education was nonexistent in the primary and secondary schools in Vietnam, except for a very few lessons on menstruation given to girls at puberty as part of home economics courses. No charts or pictures of the reproductive organs were ever shown. Courses in human anatomy and physiology, botany, and zoology, barely touched on the subject of sex. Neither teachers nor students would bring up such a taboo topic in class.

Sex education rested with the parents, from father to son and from mother to daughter. There are now books for prospective brides and grooms dealing with the problems of sex, but, even so, only simplified sketches are provided, and the instructions given are very general in nature.

The reluctance on the part of the Vietnamese to talk about sex probably derives from Confucian influence on Vietnamese culture for many centuries. This reserved attitude about the exposure of the human body or direct reference to any part of the body hidden under clothes is deeply ingrained in the Vietnamese people and should be considered AN EXTREMELY DELICATE TOPIC.

Sex education is an important educational function in most American schools today. It is necessary to remember, however, that Vietnamese students will need to be introduced to this totally

new and potentially embarrassing subject in a most delicate, understanding manner and with prior consultation with parents.

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Four distinguished Vietnamese educators assisted IDRA in conducting a seminar to acquaint staff with information and suggestions from which programmatic recommendations could be formulated in assisting school districts that will serve Vietnamese children. The educators advocated the belief of the Vietnamese community that a culturally pluralistic bilingual/bicultural program which sanctions maintenance of their culture and language is a desirable and feasible projection for responding to the needs of their children.

Emphasizing that there was no contradiction between their desire for bilingual/ bicultural education and the necessity to learn English, the Vietnamese educators agreed that both could be attained. English competency is certainly necessary, they agreed, but maintenance of the Vietnamese language is essential to preserving the family structure, cohesiveness and mental health.

Emphasizing the needs of the total Vietnamese community, it was stated that there are three priorities in the Vietnamese community: (1) language learning for survival sake, (2) skill learning, and (3) job placement. Steps (2) and (3) are obviously contingent upon language acquisition.

In terms of language acquisition there are three major considerations to a successful language program for Vietnamese. The first is special grouping according to age, profession and marital status. The grouping according to age is consistent with current educational practice. Grouping according to profession, however, may be objectionable to some American educators but acceptable according to Vietnamese culture. The fisherman, for example, may feel uncomfortable and inhibited in the presence of a professional. Classification according to marital status also reflects a cultural requisite. A husband and wife will not like being placed in the same class. In deference to her spouse, a wife may be hesitant in class so as not to overshadow the progress and ability of her husband. It was also suggested that schools respond to children not only by age and skills but also on whether the child comes from an urban city or from a rural village.

The second consideration is that the teacher have a basic knowledge of the difference between English and Vietnamese. Vietnamese is an analytic language because it does not have inflection of verbs, adjectives or nouns. For example, the sentence - Sky blue - satisfies the syntactical structure of the English - The sky is blue. Careful consideration should also be given to pronunciation. The Vietnamese language employs a variety of diacritical marks that establish how a vowel is to be pronounced and also what meaning the word will have. For

example, co - to shrink, có - to have, cò - stork, cỏ - herb, cọ - to rub, and cô - young unmarried lady. Many Vietnamese speakers will therefore have difficulty in pronunciation because of what they may view as a deficiency in the English language.

The third consideration for a successful language acquisition program is the use of Vietnamese professionals or paraprofessionals as instructors or as facilitators for a non-Vietnamese teacher. A Vietnamese teacher or assistant will certainly be valuable as a material developer and also for sensitizing school personnel to Vietnamese culture and language. The educational system should also be examining methods or alternatives for certifying Vietnamese professionals and parents to act as aides and teachers in the classroom, and as counselors and administrators.

Education enjoys an exalted status in Vietnamese culture. Upon recognizing the basic cultural and linguistic differences of the Vietnamese people, educators will find that they are willing students.

Vietnamese students who have already been a part of the educational process have been generally praised in glowing terms. These generalizations about how rosy everything is for the Vietnamese student are over simplistic and may create stereotypes that may prove burdensome in the future.

The panel also agreed that the Vietnamese child is generally what we would call a "good student" in terms of behavior and

academic aggressiveness. These characteristics are due mostly to the status that education and educators enjoy in the home culture. It should be noted, however, that these students have specific needs according to age group that are not dissimilar to other linguistically different children. Serious adjustment problems at the lower grades have been minimal, but those children in middle school and high school have more difficulty adjusting to the mode of instruction and to the sociological changes demanded of them.

A striking difference that causes difficulty for students at middle schools and high schools is curriculum selection. Vietnamese children are not accustomed to selecting courses as is done at the upper levels. A recommendation was made that school counselors take special care in explaining the credit system to both Vietnamese students and parents and that a pamphlet be developed in Vietnamese outlining the number of courses required, the elective choices, grading, etc.

There is a difference in teaching strategy between the Vietnamese educational system and the American one. Vietnamese children do not carry a set of books to or from school as do American students. Books are a scarce commodity in Vietnam as they are in many parts of the world. Because of the dearth of books and other expendable instructional items, the Vietnamese student is used to learning by the rote method: listening, memorizing and repeating. The shift should be a gradual one.

A suggestion was made that teachers of Vietnamese children be provided with workshops to familiarize them with the differences and similarities between the educational systems.

Bilingual education should not only be viewed as a method of solving linguistic problems but also as a means of enriching one's life that encourages full participation in life. The school should strive to help the child recognize himself as a unique (and important) individual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed below are several books which can be found in most public libraries. Your own library may have many others. For an extensive bibliography and other resource material contact the National Indo-Chinese Clearinghouse, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1161 North Kent Street, Arlington, VA 22209; (800) 336-3040 (toll free).

Cooke, David Coxe.
Vietnam: The Country, The People (1st ed.) New York, W. W. Norton (1968) 147 p. illus.

Dareff, Hal.
The Story of Vietnam; A Background Book For Young People. New York, Parents' Magazine Press (1966) 256 p. maps.

Graham, Gail B.
*The Beggar in the Blanket & Other Vietnamese Tales, retold by Gail B. Graham. Illustrated by Brigitte Bryan. New York, Dial Press (1970) 95 p. illus.

Eight Vietnamese folktales including an Oriental Cinderella tale and a legend explaining why all crows seem to vanish from Vietnam during the month of Ngau.

Hammer, Ellen Joy.
Vietnam Yesterday and Today. York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1966) 282 p. illus., map, ports.

Sally Francois, ed.
*We the Vietnamese; Voices from Vietnam. New York, Praeger (1971) 270 p. illus., map, ports.

West, Fred.
*Getting to Know the Two Vietnams. Illustrated by Polly Bolian. New York, Coward-McCann (1963) 64 p. illus. (part col.)

*In reviewing these materials, Vietnamese assistant teachers pointed out that most of the stories reflect rural life while most refugee children come from an urban environment.